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(54) Sealant compositions

(57) The present invention relates to a sealant composition which comprises:

(a) 100 parts by weight of a hydrogenated vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon butadiene-vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon block copolymer which has an overall weight average molecular weight of from 30,000 to 300,000, a vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon block weight

The present invention further relates to a sealant solution containing a solvent and at least 30 % by weight of the sealant composition according to the invention.

(b) 20-400 parts by weight of an adhesion promoting resin.

average molecular weight of from 4000 to 35,000, and wherein the butadiene block has a vinyl content of at least 45% by weight, and

There are at least two major criteria in formulating a sealant composition. The sealant must possess some degree of slump resistance at high service temperatures. Additionally, the sealant should have a good working viscosity in the melt so it can be easily coated on to various substrates, and/or the sealant should have a low solution viscosity in solutions containing a high amount (≥ 30 %wt, preferably ≥ 40 %wt) of solids.

Quite adequate sealant compositions have been made using some of the lower molecular weight polymers of this type but sacrifices in terms of high temperature properties must be accepted. The large styrene endblocks in the higher molecular weight SEBS polymers are resistant to flow but give excellent high service temperature performance. Examples of compromise solutions are the use of a lower molecular weight polymer and blending in a relatively low molecular diblock polymer of this type. Thus it can be seen that it would be advantageous to be able to make an easily coatable sealant composition and retain or enhance the high temperature properties achievable with the higher molecular weight SEBS polymers.

This invention provides sealant compositions which comprise a hydrogenated vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon-butadiene-vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon (SEBS) block copolymer which has an overall weight average molecular weight of from 30,000 to 300,000, a vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon block weight average molecular weight of from 4,000 to 35,000, and a vinyl content of at least 45% by weight (%wt), preferably 45 to 90%, and adhesion-promoting resins such as tackifying resins. For every 100 parts by weight of block copolymer, there should be 20-400, and preferably 60 to 350 parts by weight of adhesion-promoting resin. Optionally, the sealant composition may further comprise polyvinyl aromatic hydrocarbon block reinforcing resins, flow promoting resins, oils, polyolefins, fillers, waxes, and/or solvents. The preferred structure for the block copolymers used herein is linear, i.e., S-EB-S. However, block copolymers having branched, radial, and star structures may also be useful in this invention. Such structures may be generically represented by the formula

The butadiene used herein must produce a polymer block with a high vinyl content. In other words, the percent of 1,2 addition of the butadiene should be at least 45%wt, preferably 45 to 90%wt. Below 45 %wt, polymer viscosity is similar to conventional polymers and there is no advantage. Above 90%wt, the viscosity decrease has reached a plateau and no longer drops with higher 1,2 content. Therefore, there is no further advantage. The 1,2-vinyl content is more preferably at least 50 %wt; even more preferably at least 60 %wt; yet even more preferably at least 70 %wt; most preferably at least 75 %wt. The 1,2-vinyl content is more preferably at most 85 %wt, even more preferably at most 80 %wt.

X-B-L!

X-A-B-L!

X-A-B-A-L!

L!-B-Y-B-L!

L!-A-B-Y-B-A-L!

wherein B represents polymerized units of one or more conjugated diene hydrocarbons such as butadiene or isoprene, A represents polymerized units of one or more vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon compounds such as styrene, X is the residue of a monolithium initiator such as sec-butyllithium, and Y is the residue of a dilithium initiator such as the diadduct of sec-butyllithium and m-diisopropenylbenzene. Some structures, including those pertaining to polyolithium initiators or random units of styrene and a conjugated diene, generally have limited practical utility although known in the art.

The anionic polymerization of the conjugated diene hydrocarbons is typically controlled with structure modifiers such as dichloro- or ethyl glyme (1,2-diepoxyethane) to obtain the desired amount of 1,2-addition. As described in Re 27 145 which is incorporated by reference herein, the level of 1,2-addition of a butadiene polymer or copolymer can greatly affect cis:trans properties after hydrogenation. The 1,2-addition of butadiene polymers significantly and surprisingly additionally influences the polymer as described above. A 1,2-addition of about 40% is achieved during polymerization at 50°C with about 6% by volume of diethyl ether or about 200 ppm of ethyl glyme in the final solution. A 1,2 addition of about 47% (within the scope of this invention) is achieved during polymerization by the presence of about 250 ppm of ortho-dimethoxybenzene (ODMB) in the final solution. A 1,2 addition of 78% (within the scope of this invention) is achieved during polymerization by the presence of about 300 ppm of 1,2-diepoxypropane (DEP) in the final solution.

In general, the polymers useful in this invention may be prepared by contacting the monomer or monomers with an organoalkali metal compound in a suitable solvent at a temperature within the range from -150°C to 300°C, preferably at a temperature within the range from 0°C to 100°C. Particularly effective polymerization initiators are organolithium compounds having the general formula:

R₁L!

wherein R is an aliphatic, cycloaliphatic, alkyl-substituted cycloaliphatic, aromatic or alkyl-substituted aromatic hydrocarbon radical having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms.

Suitable solvents include those useful in the solution polymerization of the polymer and include aliphatic, cycloaliphatic, alkyl-substituted cycloaliphatic, aromatic and alkyl-substituted aromatic hydrocarbons, ethers and mixtures thereof. Suitable solvents, then, include aliphatic hydrocarbons such as butane, pentane, hexane, and heptane, cycloaliphatic hydrocarbons such as cyclohexane, and cycloheptane, alkyl-substituted cycloaliphatic hydrocarbons such as methylcyclohexane, and methylcycloheptane, aromatic hydrocarbons such as benzene and the alkyl-substituted aromatic hydrocarbons such as toluene, and xylene and ethers such as tetrahydrofuran, diethyl ether, and di-n-butyl ether.

The hydrogenation of these polymers may be carried out by a variety of well established processes including soluble transition metal catalysts. Suitable hydrogenation processes which can be used are ones wherein the diene-containing polymer or copolymer is dissolved in an inert hydrocarbon diluent such as cyclohexane and hydrogenated by reaction with hydrogen in the presence of a soluble hydrogenation catalyst. Such processes are disclosed in U.S. Patent Nos. 3,113,986, 4,226,952 and Reissue 27,145, the disclosures of which are herein incorporated by reference. The polymers are hydrogenated in such a manner as to produce hydrogenated polymers having a residual unsaturation content in polydiene blocks of less than 5 percent by weight, preferably less than 1 %wt and more preferably as close to 0 percent as possible, of their original unsaturation content prior to hydrogenation. A titanium catalyst such as disclosed in U.S. Patent 5,039,755, which is herein incorporated by reference, may also be used in the hydrogenation process.

The molecular weights of linear polymers or unassembled linear segments of polymers such as mono-, di-, triblock, etc., or the arms of star polymers before coupling are conveniently measured by Gel Permeation Chromatography (GPC), where the GPC system has been appropriately calibrated, typically with polystyrene standards of known molecular weight. For anionically polymerized linear polymers, the polymer is essentially monodisperse (weight average molecular weight/number average molecular weight ratio approaches unity), and it is both convenient and adequately descriptive to report the "peak" molecular weight of the narrow molecular weight distribution observed. Usually, the peak value is between the number and the weight average. The peak molecular weight is the molecular weight of the main species shown on the chromatograph. For polydisperse polymers the weight average molecular weight should be calculated from the chromatograph and used. The materials used in the columns of the GPC are styrene-divinyl benzene gels or silica gels. The solvent is tetrahydrofuran and the detector is a refractive index detector.

Measurement of the true molecular weight of the final coupled radial or star polymer is not as straightforward or as easy to make using GPC. This is because the radial or star shaped molecules do not separate and elute through the packed GPC columns in the same manner as do the linear polymers used for the calibration, and, hence, the time of arrival at a UV or refractive index detector is not a good indicator of the molecular weight. A good method to use for a radial or star polymer is to measure the weight average molecular weight by light scattering techniques. The sample is dissolved in a suitable solvent at a concentration less than 1.0 gram of sample per 100 milliliters of solvent and filtered using a syringe and porous membrane filters of less than 0.5 microns pore size directly into the light scattering cell. The light scattering measurements are performed as a function of scattering angle and of polymer concentration using standard procedures. The differential refractive index (DRI) of the sample is measured at the same wavelength and in the same solvent used for the light scattering. The following references relate to the subject of measuring molecular weight.

1. Modern Size-Exclusion Liquid Chromatography, W. W. Yau, J. J. Kirkland, D. D. Bly, John Wiley & Sons, New York, NY, 1979.
2. Light Scattering from Polymer Solution, M. B. Huglin, ed., Academic Press, New York, NY, 1972.
3. W. Kaye and A. J. Havlik, Applied Optics, 12, 541 (1973).
4. M. L. McConnell, American Laboratory, 63, May, 1978.

The hydrogenated vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon-butadiene-vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon (SEBS) block copolymer preferably has an overall weight average molecular weight of from 45,000 to 200,000. The vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon block weight average molecular weight is preferably 5,000 to 32,000.

The poly(vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon) content, typically the polystyrene content, is preferably in the range from 15 to 45 % by weight on the basis of the total polymer, more preferably from 20 to 40 %wt, even more preferably from 25 to 35 %wt.

In sealant applications, it is common practice to add an adhesion promoting resin such as a tackifying resin that is compatible with the polymer, generally from 20 to 400 parts per hundred parts of polymer by weight (pbw), preferably 60 to 350 pbw. For every 100 parts by weight (pbw) of copolymer, there should be at least 20 pbw of resin to achieve the low viscosity and economics required for sealant applications. No more than 400 pbw adhesion promoting resin per 100 parts polymer can be used or the sealant will not have the visco-elastic properties required to resist flow after application.

A common tackifying resin is a diene-olefin copolymer of piperylene and 2-methyl-2-butene having a softening point of about 95°C. This resin is available commercially under the tradename Wingtack® 95 and is prepared by the cationic polymerization of 60% piperlene, 10% isoprene, 5% cyclo-pentadiene, 15% 2-methyl-2-butene and about 10% dimer, as taught in U.S. Patent No. 3,577,398. Other tackifying resins may be employed wherein the resinous copolymer comprises 20-80 weight percent of piperylene and 80-20 weight percent of 2-methyl-2-butene.

Other adhesion promoting resins which are also useful in the compositions of this invention include hydrogenated rosins, esters of rosins, polyterpenes, terphenylphenol resins and polymerized mixed olefins, lower softening point resins and liquid resins. An example of a liquid resin is Adiac® LV resin from Hercules. To obtain good thermo-oxidative and color stability, it is preferred that the tackifying resin be a saturated resin, e.g., a hydrogenated dicyclopentadiene resin such as Escorez® 5000 series resin made by Exxon or a hydrogenated polystyrene or polyalpha-methylstyrene resin as Regalrez® resin made by Hercules. Ring and ball softening points of solid resins may be from 40°C to 140°C, preferably 80 to 115°C, as determined by ASTM E28. Liquid resins, i.e., softening points less than room temperature, may be used as well as combinations of solid and liquid resins. The selection of the particular tackifying agent is, in large part, dependent upon the specific polymer employed in the respective sealant composition.

A composition of the instant invention may further contain plasticizers, such as rubber extending plasticizers, or compounding oils or organic or inorganic pigments and dyes. Plasticizers are well-known in the art and include both high saturates content oils and naphthenic oils. Preferred plasticizers are highly saturated oils, e.g. Tufflo® 6056 and 6204 oil made by Arco and naphthenic process oils, e.g. Shellflex® 371 oil made by Shell. The amounts of plasticizer

employed in the invention composition may vary from 0 to 150 phr, preferably 0 to 100 phr, and most preferably between 0 and 60 phr. If present, the amount of plasticizer is typically at least 5 phr, preferably at least 10 phr.

The sealant formulation may further contain poly(vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon) block reinforcing resins. Aromatic resins may be employed as reinforcing resins, provided that they are compatible with the particular polymer used in the formulation. Normally, these resins have ring and ball softening points between 80°C and 115°C although mixtures of aromatic resins having higher and lower softening points may also be used. In that case typically the average softening point is in the range from 80-115°. Useful resins include coumarone-indene resins, polystyrene resins, vinyltoluene-alpha-methylstyrene copolymers and polyindene resins.

Various types of fillers and pigments may be included in sealant formulations. This is especially true for exterior sealants in which fillers are added not only to create the desired appeal but also to improve the performance of the sealant such as its weatherability. A wide variety of fillers can be used. Suitable fillers include calcium carbonate, clays, talcs, silica, zinc oxide, and titanium dioxide. The amount of filler usually is in the range of 0 to 65%wt based on the solvent free portion of the formulation depending on the type of filler used and the application for which the sealant is intended. If filler is present, the amount of filler is typically at least 10 %wt based on the solvent free portion of the sealant formulation. An especially preferred filler is titanium dioxide.

If the sealant will be applied from solvent solution, the organic portion of the formulation will be dissolved in a solvent or blend of solvents. Aromatic hydrocarbon solvents such as toluene, xylene, or Shell Cyclo Sol 53 (trade mark) are suitable. Aliphatic hydrocarbon solvents such as hexane, naphtha or mineral spirits may also be used. If desired, a solvent blend consisting of a hydrocarbon solvent with a polar solvent can be used. Suitable polar solvents include esters such as isopropyl acetate and n-butyl acetate, ketones such as methyl isobutyl ketone, and alcohols such as isopropyl alcohol. The amount of polar solvent used depends on the particular polar solvent chosen and on the structure of the particular polymer used in the formulation. Usually, the amount of polar solvent used is between 0 and 80%wt in the solvent blend, preferably between 10 and 70 %wt, such as e.g. 50 %wt.

Optional components of the present invention are stabilizers which inhibit or retard heat degradation, oxidation, skin formation and color formation. Stabilizers are typically added to the commercially available compounds in order to protect the polymers against heat degradation and oxidation during the preparation, use and high temperature storage of the composition.

Stabilizers are typically present in a total amount from 0.1 to 10 % by weight, based on the solvent-free portion of the sealant formulation, preferably 0.5 to 5 % by weight.

Typically, at least one antioxidant is present as stabilizer.

Combinations of primary and secondary antioxidants are preferred. Such combinations include sterically hindered phenolics with phosphites or thioethers, such as hydroxyphenylpropanates with aryl phosphites or thioethers, or aminophenols with aryl phosphites. Specific examples of useful antioxidant combinations include 3-(3,5-di-*t*-butyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)propanate-methane (Irganox® 1010 from Ciba-Geigy) with tris(nonaphenyl)-phosphite (Polygard® HR from Unifayl), Irganox® 1010 with bis(2,4-di-*t*-butyl)pentamethylene diphosphite (Ultranox® 626 from Borg-Warner). Additional stabilizers known in the art may also be incorporated into the composition. These may be for protection during the life of the article against, for example, oxygen, ozone and ultra-violet radiation. However, these additional stabilizers should be compatible with the essential stabilizers mentioned hereinabove and their intended function as taught herein.

All sealant compositions based on the polymers of this invention will contain some combination of the various formulating ingredients disclosed herein. No definite rules can be offered about which ingredients will be used. The skilled formulator will choose particular types of ingredients and adjust their concentrations to give exactly the combination of properties needed in the composition for any specific adhesive, coating or sealant application.

Sealants are gap fillers. Therefore, they are used in fairly thick layers to fill the space between two substrates. Since the two substrates frequently move relative to each other, sealants are usually low modulus compositions capable of withstanding this movement. Since sealants are frequently exposed to the weather, the hydrogenerated polymers are usually used. Resins and plasticizers will be selected to maintain low modulus and minimize dirt pick-up. Fillers and pigment will be selected to give appropriate durability and color. Since sealants are applied in fairly thick layers, solvent content is as low as possible to minimize shrinkage.

A formulator skilled in the art will see tremendous versatility in the polymers of this invention to prepare sealants having properties suitable for many different applications.

The sealant compositions of the present invention can be prepared by blending the components at an elevated temperature, preferably between 50°C and 200°C, until a homogeneous blend is obtained, usually less than three (3) hours. Various methods of blending are known to the art and any method that produces a homogeneous blend is satisfactory. The resultant compositions may then be used in a wide variety of applications. Alternatively, the ingredients may be blended into a solvent.

Sealant compositions of this invention can be used for many applications. Particularly preferred is their use as gap fillers for constructions which will be baked (for example, in a paint baking oven) after the sealant is applied. This would

include their use in automobile manufacture and in appliance manufacture. Another preferred application is their use in gasketing materials, for example, in lids for food and beverage containers. The unhydrogenated precursors may also be used in these applications.

Variations of sealant compositions that are subjects of this invention will include adhesives, such as contact and structural adhesives, mastics, diaper assembly and personal care adhesives, and laminating adhesives. Especially useful will be the low viscosity characteristic of high vinyl ethylene/butylene rubber blocks for ease of adhesive application, e.g., sprayability.

Example 1

PP5823 is an SEBS Block copolymer with a high vinyl content. Its molecular characteristics are compared with those of Polymer A, a commercial polymer whose viscosity is considered too high for most, if not all, commercial sealant applications, and others in Table 1 below. It can be seen that PP5828 and Polymer A are very similar except for the vinyl content: 78% of the rubber block of PP5828 is in a 1,2 microstructure compared to 38% for Polymer A. The flow properties of PP5828 are dramatically better than Polymer A as indicated by sealant viscosity (more than an order of magnitude lower). Polymer B is the block copolymer of this type that is currently used to make sealant formulations commercially. The sealant viscosity of the formulation of this invention, made with PP5828, is one fifth of that of the formulation made with Polymer B while the SAFT and slump temperature are the same. Similarly, PP5823 (78% 1,2 addition) exhibits much lower sealant viscosity than either Polymer A or B. PP5819 has an intermediate level of 1,2 structure (47%) but is still markedly better (lower) in sealant viscosity than Polymers A or B. The low sealant viscosity means that the sealant composition can be mixed, pumped, and applied more easily than sealants with higher viscosity.

Polymer Descriptions					
Polymer	MW (real)	SEBS Block Description	1,2 Bd level	PSC	
A	67,000	10-47-10	38%	29.9%	
PP-5828	56,000	10-39-10	78%	29.6%	
B	50,000	7.5-35-7.5	38%	30%	
PP-5819	38,000	6-26-6	47%	29.5%	
PP-5823	35,000	6-23-6	78%	29.3%	

Table 2

Sealant Results				
Polymer	Sealant Viscosity at 177 ° (350°F) (cP)	Shear Adhesion Failure Temperature (°C)	Slump Temperature (°C)	
A	33,500	73	105	
PP-5828	1,190	54.5	80	
B	5,280	54.1	80	
PP-5819	1,800	52.6	60	
PP-5823	400	48.1	55	

Temperature dependent properties, such as shear adhesion failure temperature (SAFT) and slump temperature, and melt viscosity were measured. A Brookfield Viscometer model RVT-D and spindle 29 was used to measure the viscosity at 177°C. To measure the slump temperature, the sealant formulations were poured hot and allowed to solidify in metal channels with the following dimensions: 2.5cm wide, by 2.5cm high, and 1.25cm deep. The channels were placed vertically in an oven and the temperature was raised in 5°C increments, allowing the sample to equilibrate for 30 minutes at each temperature before increasing the temperature again. The slump temperature was the temperature at which the sample sagged more than 3/16 inch in the channel. SAFT was determined on a lap-shear bond of 2.5cm x 2.5cm area on an aluminum surface under a load of 190g. The temperature was ramped up from 40°C in 5°C increments every 10 minutes until bond failure occurred.

Example 2

Block copolymers PP 5828 and B described in Example 1 were used to prepare sealant formulation solutions containing 40 % by weight of solids as shown in table 3. The solution viscosity was determined at 25°C using a Brookfield viscometer. The sealant formulation containing polymer B (not according to the invention) had a solution viscosity of 89.2 centipoise, whereas the sealant formulation containing polymer PP 5828 according to the invention had a solution viscosity of 22.8 centipoise. A low solution viscosity at 40 % solids content is advantageous as the sealant can then be easily applied, or alternatively, the solids content can then be increased to e.g. 50-90 % by weight, preferably 65 to 85% by weight.

Table 3

	Sealant formulation		
	1	2	
A	160 g	-	
PP 5828	-	16.0 g	
Regalite R 101	44.0 g	9.6 g	
Ondina 68	10.4 g	10.4 g	
n-butyl acetate	80.0 g	80.0 g	
toluene	46.0 g	40.0 g	

Ondina 68 is a hydrogenated paraffinic processing oil (plasticizer)
Kriсталlex F100 is an aromatic reinforcing resin
Regalite R101 is a hydrogenated hydrocarbon tackifying resin

Claims

1. Sealant composition which comprises:
(a) 100 parts by weight of a hydrogenated vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon butadiene-vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon block copolymer which has an overall weight average molecular weight of from 30,000 to 300,000, a vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon block weight average molecular weight of from 4000 to 35,000, and wherein the butadiene block has a vinyl content of at least 45% by weight, and
(b) 20-400 parts by weight of an adhesion promoting resin.
2. Sealant composition according to claim 1 wherein the vinyl content is from 45 to 90% by weight.
3. Sealant composition according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the overall weight average molecular weight is from 45,000 to 200,000.
4. Sealant composition according to any one of claims 1-3 wherein the vinyl aromatic hydrocarbon block molecular weight is from 5,000 to 32,000.
5. Sealant composition according to any one of the preceding claims further comprising a filler.
6. Sealant composition according to any one of the preceding claims, further comprising a plasticizer.
7. Sealant composition according to any one of the preceding claims, further comprising a reinforcing resin.
8. Sealant solutions containing a solvent and at least 30 % by weight on the basis of the total solution of a sealant composition as claimed in any one of the preceding claims.



DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cls.)
A	WO 95 12645 A (SHELL INT RESEARCH) 11 May 1995 * page 10, line 26 - page 14, line 16 *	1-8	C09K3/10 C08L53/02
A	US 4 242 245 A (ALLISON GEORGE M III) 30 December 1980 * the whole document *	1-8	
A	EP 0 322 055 A (SHELL INT RESEARCH) 28 June 1989 * the whole document *	1-8	
A	FR 2 423 460 A (BOSTIK SA) 16 November 1979 * page 5, line 11 - page 9, line 18 * * claims *	1-8	
A	EP 0 367 165 A (HERCULES INC) 9 May 1990 * the whole document *	1-8	
P, A	EP 0 822 227 A (SHELL INT RESEARCH) 4 February 1998 * claims; table 1 *	1	C09K C09J C08L
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		11 June 1998	Pueltz, C
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons A : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			